DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 106 717 CG 009 783

AUTHOR Keierleber, Dennis L.; And Others
TITLE Expertness, Type of Appeal, and Influence in Counseling. Research Bulletin Volume 15, Number 3.
INSTITUTION Minnesota Univ., Minneapolis. Office for Student Affairs.
PUB DATE 10 Jul 74
NOTE 15p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Change Agents; College Students; *Counseling Effectiveness; Counselor Characteristics; *Interpersonal Competence; *Physical Characteristics; Research Projects; *Success Factors

ABSTRACT

A counseling analogue study was conducted to test the hypothesis that expertness will increase the freedom of an attractive interviewer to use different types of influence. It was predicted that only experts would obtain change with an impersonal appeal, while both experts and inexperts would be successful with a personal appeal. Opinion change was assessed through self-ratings of achievement motivation by 57 college males. Subjects' ratings were made immediately before, immediately after, and one week after a simulated counseling interview. The results failed to support the hypothesis; with both appeals, experts and inexperts were equally effective. Trends in change scores and in subjects' evaluations of the interviewer suggested that the personal and impersonal appeals had a differential impact. (Author)

ED106717

office for student affairs RESEARCH BULLETIN

EXPERTNESS, TYPE OF APPEAL, AND INFLUENCE IN COUNSELING

Dennis L. Keierleber, Ronald P. Matross, and Stanley R. Strong
Student Life Studies
University of Minnesota

Abstract

A counseling analogue study was conducted to test the hypothesis that expertness will increase the freedom of an attractive interviewer to use different types of influence. It was predicted that only experts would obtain opinion change with an impersonal appeal, while both experts and inexperts would be successful with a personal appeal. Opinion change was assessed through self-ratings of achievement motivation by 57 college males. Subjects' ratings were made immediately before, immediately after, and one week after a simulated counseling interview. The results failed to support the hypothesis; with both appeals, experts and inexperts were equally effective. Trends in change scores and in subjects' evaluations of the interviewer suggested that the personal and impersonal appeals had a differential impact.

CG 009 783

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

university of minnesota Volume 15, Number (3) July 10, 1974

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED106717

CG 009 783

EXPERTNESS, TYPE OF APPEAL, AND INFLUENCE IN THE INTERVIEW

Dennis L. Keierleber, Ronald P. Matross, and Stanley R. Strong
Student Life Studies
University of Minnesota

The purpose of this study was to explore further the impact of expertness on an interviewer's ability to influence a client. Previous studies have shown that expert interviewers are more persuasive than inexpert interviewers (Strong and Schmidt, 1970; Patton, 1969; Bergin, 1962). More recently, Strong and Dixon (1971) found that when an interviewer was interpersonally attractive, his expertness had no effect on his influence; but when the interviewer was unattractive, his degree of expertness was critical to his influence. This finding suggests that the impact of expertness is complex and is mediated by other variables in the interview process.

One of these variables may be the way influence is attempted, the manner in which the interviewer presents the views he wants the client to accept. Strong and Matross (1973) have proposed that congruence between "power base" and type of appeal is an important determinant of influence. A power base is a positive quality, such as expertness or attractiveness, attributed to the interviewer by his client. Strong and Matross suggest that appeals to personal experiences and opinions are congruent with the power base of interpersonal attractiveness, while appeals to impersonal data and facts are congruent with the expertness power base. They propose that incongruence between power base and appeal leads to resistance rather than the desired influence. One implication of this formulation is that an interviewer who is perceived as <u>both</u> expert and attractive will be influential with both personal and impersonal appeals, while an interviewer who is perceived as attractive but inexpert will be influential with only a personal appeal. Thus while expertness

may not affect the strength of an attractive interviewer's influence, it may increase his freedom to utilize different types of influence.

The hypotheses tested in this study were the following: 1) An attractive interviewer's perceived expertness will have no impact on his influence when he uses a personal appeal. 2) An attractive interviewer's expertness will control his influence when he uses an impersonal appeal: when the interviewer is perceived as an expert he will obtain influence; when he is perceived as inexpert, he will not obtain influence.

Method

The hypotheses were tested in a three-session experiment in which subjects' opinions were obtained before and after a 20-minute interview. In the interview, the interviewer attempted to influence the subjects' opinions.

Subjects

Subjects were 57 male volunteers from an introductory psychology course in the College of Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota. They received points applying to their course grade for their participation in the experiment. Their ages ranged from 18 to 32 years, with a mean of 20 years; a majority were sophomores.

Procedure

On sign-up posters and in the first session subjects were informed that the purpose of the study was to explore the impact of the interviewer's expertness on the usefulness of a diagnostic interview in improving the accuracy of students' self-estimates of their achievement motivation. Students were told that short interviews with skilled counselors had been found to result in more accurate ratings of achievement motivation. Our purpose now was to determine whether the improvement was due to the expertness of the interviewer or the opportunity the interview afforded the student to examine his experiences.

The students then completed their initial rating of their achievement motivation on a stanine rating scale in which they were asked to indicate how motivated to achievement they were compared to other college males by checking one of nine points on the scale from "very much less" to "very much more". The percentage of college men who would rate themselves at each stanine level was indicated on the scale. After the ratings, the students signed up for their interviews.

Subjects were assigned to one of eight conditions determined by (a) two interviewers, (b) inexpert and expert interviewer introductions and (c) two types of appeal. Assignment of subjects to conditions was random within self-rating levels. Seven subjects were assigned to all but one cell, which had eight subjects. An analysis of variance of initial self-ratings by interviewer, introduction and type of influence appeal yielded no significant differences among conditions. The two interviewers were male graduate students in counseling psychology. They received 12 hours training in their interviewing roles, in which they learned to portray the "attractive role" developed by Schmidt and Strong (1971). The interviewer was friendly and responsive to the student throughout the interview, and indicated that he liked the same things the student liked.

The interviews were held in a seven-day period one week after the first session. When a subject reported for his interview, he was greeted by the receptionist and given a typewritten sheet which stated that the interview consisted of a discussion of the subject's achievements in his academic and extra-curricular experiences in high school and college. The sheet also introduced the interviewer to one-half of the students as "Your interview will be with Dr._____, a psychologist with several years experience in diagnostic interviewing with college students." For the other half of

the students, the statement read "Your interview will be with _____, a first year graduate student in psychology who has offered to participate in this study." In addition, in the expert condition a nameplate was on the interviewer's desk identifying him as Dr._____, along with several psychology journals and books. The items were removed in the inexpert condition. After reading the introduction, the student was directed to the interview office. The interviewer greeted the subject and began with a brief statement of the structure of the interview. The subject then related his past experiences concerning his achievement, with occasional comments and interjections from the interviewer. After 16 minutes the interviewer began the appeal by commenting that he had gained an understanding of the subject's achievement motivation. He then asked the student how he would rate his achievement motivation compared to other college men. After the student stated his rating, one-half of the students received the personal appeal:

> "Mm.Mm. I can see that. You know just in talking with you and comparing what you have told me with what other male college students have told me, my opinion would be that you have need achievement motivation compared to other college males."

The interviewer followed with a one-minute rationale of his rating, citing examples from the interview which "led" to his opinion. The other half of the subjects received the impersonal appeal as follows:

> "Mm.Mm. I can see how <u>you</u> might see it that way (pause). However, it is apparent that you are definitely more motivated than the average college male in need for achievement. Obviously if you want to be accurate you will adopt this finding. I guess you'd like to talk about it more because of this discrepancy, but quite honestly it would not be helpful to me."

In the blank in both appeals, the interviewer inserted a descriptive phrase from a stanine scale which was three levels away from that which the subject had rated himself before the interview. In all cases the interviewer's opinion was three levels lower than the initial rating. After the appeal,

the interviewer indicated the end of the interview by stating, "Ordinarily these interviews are quite routine, but I have really got a great deal out of talking with you. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Thank you."

The student then returned to the receptionist and rated his need for achievement again. He also completed an Interview Reaction Questionnaire consisting of 30 true-false statements about the interview, and a 100 item adjective checklist describing the interview. The student indicated how descriptive each of the adjectives was of the interview on a 5 point scale from "not at all descriptive" to "very descriptive". The third session was seven days after the interview. Students completed the self-rating of achievement motivation a final time as well as a form on which they were asked to give their overall reaction to the experiment. Students were then individually de-briefed. Achievement motivation rating change scores were derived by subtracting the student's rating immediately after the interview from his rating before the interview (immediate change score) and subtracting the student's self-rating one week after the interview from the pre-interview rating one week earlier (final change score).

To test the two hypotheses, the self-rating change scores and adjectives were analyzed with an analysis of variance of the following orthogonal contrasts: 1) Expert versus inexpert introduction within personal appeal. 2) Expert versus inexpert introduction within impersonal appeal. 3) Personal versus impersonal appeal. 4) Interviewers. Contrasts 5, 6, and 7 examined interactions between interviewers and contrasts 1, 2, and 3.

The true-false responses of the Interview Reaction Questionnaire items were evaluated by chi-square.

RESULTS

Self-Ratings and Change Scores

Means of the subjects' achievement motivation ratings before the interview, immediately after the interview, and one week after the interview were 5.89, 5.07, and 5.14 respectively; standard deviations were 1.66, 1.63, and 1.69 respectively. Intercorrelations among the three administrations were .68 (before and immediately after), .71 (before and one week after), and .94 (immediately after and one week after).

The means and standard deviations for the immediate change scores and final change scores are presented in Table I. For the immediate change

---

insert Table I about here

---

scores, the mean changes obtained with personal appeal (range from $\bar{X}$ = 1.13 to $\bar{X}$ = 1.86) are larger in all comparisons than mean changes with the impersonal appeal (range from $\bar{X}$ = .43 to $\bar{X}$ = 1.57). For Interviewer A the changes obtained with the expert introduction are larger than with the inexpert introduction with both the personal appeals ($\bar{X}$ = 1.86 for expert versus $\bar{X}$ = 1.29 for inexpert) and impersonal appeals ($\bar{X}$ = 1.57 for expert versus $\bar{X}$ = 1.00 for inexpert). For Interviewer B mean changes with inexpert introduction are larger for both personal and impersonal appeals (with personal appeals: $\bar{X}$ = 1.29 for inexpert versus $\bar{X}$ = 1.13 for expert; for impersonal appeals: $\bar{X}$ = .57 for inexpert versus $\bar{X}$ = .43 for expert). The differences between changes obtained with expert versus inexpert introductions are not appreciably different within the personal appeal as opposed to within the impersonal appeal. As can be seen with the above means, Interviewer A obtained more opinion change in all conditions than did Interviewer B. The pattern of means for change scores

one week later are not appreciably different from change scores for immediately after the interview. The major difference is that the amount of change obtained in the expert-impersonal condition increased for Interviewer A (from $\bar{X}$ = 1.57 to $\bar{X}$ = 1.71) and decreased for Interviewer B ($\bar{X}$ = .43 to $\bar{X}$ = .29), further accenting the differences between interviewers.

The results of the analysis of variance of orthogonal contrasts for the change scores are presented in Table II. None of the differences reached the required .05 level of statistical significance for the immediate change scores.

---

insert Table II about here

The greatest differences were between interviewers ($p = .06$) and between the personal and impersonal appeals ($p = .10$). These two differences became slightly stronger in the analysis of the final change scores with interviewer differences achieving the $p = .05$ level and appeal differences achieving a level of $p = .08$.

Perceptual Effects

For the personal appeal seven items from the adjective check list differentiated between the expert and inexpert introductions. When introduced as experts, the interviewers were regarded as significantly ($p < .05$) more orderly and controlled, but less talented, impulsive, motivated, and persevering than when introduced as inexperts. For the impersonal appeal six adjectives yielded significant introduction differences. When introduced as experts the interviewers were evaluated as significantly ($p < .05$) more polite, but less energetic, talented, active, motivated, and thorough than when introduced as inexperts.

Ten adjectives produced significant appeal differences. When using the personal appeal the interviewers were seen as significantly ($p < .05$) more

knowledgeable, serious, skillful, logical, casual, accurate, thorough, tolerant, and talented, but less dominant than they were using the impersonal appeal. In addition, five items from the Interview Reaction Questionnaire differentiated between the personal and impersonal appeals. A significantly greater number of subjects ($p < .05$) receiving the personal appeal than those receiving the impersonal appeal reported that the interviewer looked at things in a way similar to themselves, seemed to like them, was helpful in clarifying their views and helped them get a more accurate picture of themselves. Significantly fewer ($p < .05$) of those receiving the personal appeal than the impersonal appeal reported that the interview left them anxious or upset.

Interviewer differences were found for four adjectives. Interviewer A was evaluated as significantly ($p < .05$) more energetic, outgoing and persevering and significantly ($p < .05$) less awkward, tolerant, and humorless than Interviewer B. No significant perceptual differences were noted for the other three contrasts in the analysis.

DISCUSSION

The results do not support the predictions in any useful way. While, as predicted, the degree of expertness did not make a difference with the personal appeal, the degree of expertness did not make any difference with the impersonal appeal either. The results do suggest, however, that expertness and impersonal appeals are somehow related. While not constituting a statistically significant trend ($p = .11$ on final change scores), impersonal appeals by Interviewer A tended to obtain more influence when he was introduced as an expert than as an inexpert, while Interviewer B tended to obtain less influence as an expert than as an inexpert using the impersonal appeals. Subjects responded to the interviewers differentially and particularly so

with the impersonal appeal and expert introduction. The students' open-ended responses to the experiment one week following the interview offer some insight into this difference. Many comments about B's "expert" interviews were ambivalent. While subjects mentioned that he was a pleasant, likeable fellow, they were disappointed in his skills. Two representative comments were "My interviewer knew we weren't where we were supposed to be, but he didn't get us there either" and, "During the interview I did most of the talking. The interviewer's questions seemed to guide the discussion at times (I think I controlled the direction mostly) to clarify my points and the like. I didn't look at myself any closer than I had done before. I was not impressed with the interview at all." Comments about Interview A's skill and his expert interviews were much more positive. One subject noted "His presentation was logical and rational; he made it easy to accept." Other subjects noted that Interviewer A "utilized my comments for his evaluations. He had a very professional point of view." The difference (the greater expert effect of Interviewer A) was particularly evidenced in his expert-impersonal appeal condition. One student who interviewed with A reported that "My reactions were very much concerned with the blunt statement he had made and his reasoning for such a statement. Later I attempted to discover the reasoning he may have used by examining myself." Another subject said "I gave it some thought between the sessions, mostly trying to see how the interviewer came to his decisions." Subjects in this condition seemed to assume that Interviewer A had good reasons for his conclusion and that it was up to them to find them. This phenomena did not appear for Interviewer B or for the inexpert conditions for Interviewer A. These subjects' remarks suggest that behavioral evidence of expertise such as controlling the interview with well-timed and logical questions produced the differences in the interviewers' persuasiveness.

The expert and inexpert introductions may have accented the behavioral differences by creating different subject expectancies of the interviewers' behavior. Interviewer A, by confirming the expectancies of an expert role, gained enough credibility to persuade students even when he offered no good reason for his blunt statement. For Interviewer B, the expert introduction may have led the subjects to expect more directness and control than he exhibited. Perhaps Interviewer B was more persuasive as an inexpert because the subjects did not expect a likeable graduate student to be as directing as a Ph.D. psychologist. The extensive literature on client expectancies (e.g. Goldstein 1962, Bednar, 1970) appears quite relevant.

The different perceptual impacts of the personal and impersonal appeals are rather suggestive. The interviewers were consistantly evaluated more positively when they used the personal appeal than when they used the impersonal appeal. Although appeal differences in influence were not as evident as were the perceptual differences, final change score appeal differences did approach significance ($p < .08$). The comparatively few words embodied in the two appeals did seem to have a differential impact. This finding suggests the need for continued research on the content and style of interviewer interventions, in addition to examinations of interviewer characteristics.

REFERENCES

Bednar, R.L. Persuasability and the power of belief. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1970, 48, 647-625.

Berscheid, E., & Walster, E. Interpersonal attraction. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969.

Goldstein, A.P. Therapist-patient expectancies in psychotherapy. New York: Pergamon, 1962.

Hovland, C.I., & Weiss, W. The influence of source credibility on communication effectiveness. Public Opinion Quarterly, 1951, 15, 635-650.

Jones, E.E., & Gerard, H.B. Foundations of social psychology. New York: Wiley, 1967.

Poland, W.P. An exploration of the relationship between self-estimated and measured personality characteristics in the open and closed mind. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, the Ohio State University, 1963.

Raven, B.H., & French, J.R.P.,Jr. Group support, legitimate power, and social influence. Journal of Personality, 1958, 26, 400-409.

Schmidt, L.D., & Strong, S.R. Attractiveness and influence in counseling. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 1971, 18, 348-351.

Strong, S.R., & Dixon, D.N. Expertness, attractiveness, and influence in counseling. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 1971, 18, 562-570.

Strong, S.R., & Matross, R.P. Change processes in counseling and psychotherapy. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 1973, 20, 25-37.

Strong, S.R., & Schmidt, L.D. Expertness and influence in counseling, Journal of Counseling Psychology, 1970, 17, 81-87.

TABLE 1

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF CHANGE SCORES[a] BY APPEAL, INTRODUCTION AND INTERVIEWER

	Interviewer A						Interviewer B					
	Inexpert			Expert			Inexpert			Expert		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Immediate Change[b]												
PERSONAL	7	1.29	1.11	7	1.86	1.07	7	1.29	1.50	8	1.13	.35
IMPERSONAL	7	1.00	1.16	7	1.57	.98	7	.57	1.13	7	.43	1.40
Final Change[c]												
PERSONAL	7	1.29	1.11	7	1.71	1.11	7	1.29	1.38	8	1.00	.53
IMPERSONAL	7	.71	1.11	7	1.71	1.11	7	.57	1.13	7	.29	.76

[a] Stanine Units

[b] First self-rating minus second self-rating

[c] First self-rating minus third self-rating

TABLE 2

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF CHANGE SCORES[a] BY ORTHOGONAL CONTRASTS ON APPEAL BY INTRODUCTION BY INTERVIEWER CELL MEANS

SOURCE	df	Immediate Change[b]				Final Change[c]		
		MS	F	P		MS	F	P
Expert vs Inexpert within personal	1	.30	.24	.62		.03	.03	.85
Expert vs Inexpert within impersonal	1	.32	.26	.62		.91	.82	.37
Personal vs impersonal	1	3.56	2.82	.10		3.59	3.24	.08
Interviewer	1	4.70	3.73	.06		4.58	4.13	.05
Interviewer by C1	1	.96	.76	.38		.91	.82	.36
Interviewer by C2	1	.88	.70	.40		2.87	2.58	.11
Interviewer by C3	1	.63	.50	.49		.64	.58	.46
ANOVA error	49	1.26				1.11		

[a] Stanine Units

[b] First self-rating minus second self-rating

[c] First self-rating minus third self-rating